

Non-emergency Transportation Services for Former IowaCare enrollees:

The Transition to the Iowa Health and Wellness Plan

A Policy Brief

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August 24, 2014

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Introduction

The University of Iowa Public Policy Center is finishing an 8-year evaluation of the IowaCare program with an assessment of how well former IowaCare enrollees are transitioning to the Iowa Health and Wellness Plan (IHAWP)¹. IHAWP is Iowa's version of the Medicaid expansion, allowed as part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The IHAWP includes two separate programs: 1) the Iowa Wellness Plan, which is a more traditional Medicaid-like program, for individuals from 0-100% of the federal poverty level (FPL), operated by the Iowa Medicaid Enterprise, and 2) the Iowa Marketplace Choice Program, where individuals select a Qualified Health Plan (QHP), from eligible private plans in the Health Insurance Marketplace. The IowaCare program officially ended on December 31, 2013 and the IHAWP began on January 1, 2014.

A portion of the evaluation of this transition period is being done through a survey with former IowaCare enrollees. This survey asked about a series of topics related to the transition to the IHAWP including:

- The enrollment process into the IHAWP
- The enrollees' ability to keep their doctor
- The enrollees' ability to receive routine, specialty and other types of health care
- Non-covered costs associated with their new plans
- The health status of the individual
- Transportation needs

This policy brief focuses on the questions in the 2014 IowaCare enrollee survey related to non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT). NEMT is a service that is covered for Medicaid members but is not covered for enrollees in either of the IHAWP programs.

This is only a preliminary assessment, showing basic percentages for each item in the survey. At this time we are not able to assess the actual impact of the policy change, as we cannot compare the transportation needs of Medicaid members with IHAWP members. This assessment will occur following the next round of surveys for IHAWP and Medicaid members

¹ More information about the Iowa Health and Wellness Plan can be found at:
<http://dhs.iowa.gov/ime/about/iowa-health-and-wellness-plan>

when the surveys use similar questions and are administered at the same point in time. These surveys will be conducted in the fall of 2014 with the final report available in the spring of 2015.

Survey methods for the IowaCare transition survey

About 52,000 former IowaCare enrollees were automatically enrolled in the IHAWP as it began on January 1, 2014. To evaluate the transition from IowaCare to IHAWP, we conducted a survey with these former IowaCare members early in their transition. We selected a sample of 1350 from each of five groups, according to the enrollees' initial Iowa Health and Wellness Plan assignment (Table 1):

Table 1. Sample size by initial assignment into the IHAWP

Plan Group	Sample size
Wellness Plan – Fee-for-service	1,350
Wellness Plan – HMO	1,350
Wellness Plan – Managed care	1,350
Marketplace Choice – CoOpportunity	1,350
Marketplace Choice – Coventry	1,350
Total	6,750

We used both mail and web-based surveys for this assessment. The initial mailing was sent to the entire sample of 6,750 IHAWP members on April 18, 2014. The first mailing included a \$2 bill as an incentive, regardless of survey completion. A reminder postcard was sent fourteen days after the initial mailing. About fourteen days after the postcard reminder, a second mailing was sent to those who had not responded to the initial mailing. In the mailed cover letter and on the reminder postcard, enrollees were also given the option of completing the survey online and were provided the website address for that purpose.

The overall adjusted response rate for the surveys was 31%. The final sample size was determined after removing from the denominator those ineligible to complete a survey because of incorrect or out-of-state addresses. There were 972 Wellness Plan (28% response rate) and 800 (34%) Marketplace Choice enrollees who responded to the survey.

Transportation-related questions in survey covered the topics listed below.

- The enrollees' mode for traveling for health care
- How frequently they needed assistance traveling for health care
- Unmet need for NEMT
- Concern about costs associated with NEMT in the past 6 months.

Results

The results for the transportation-related questions in the survey are presented next to the questions from the written survey in the tables below. Separate results are presented for enrollees in the Iowa Wellness Plan (WP) and Iowa Marketplace Choice Programs (MPC), since their income may be different enough to cause differences in need for transportation assistance.

Transportation-related questions

When you need to get health care, what is the type of transportation you use most often to get to your visit? (Please choose only one answer)

WP (n=953)	MPC (n=795)	Response options
60%	80%	I drive myself, using my own vehicle
20%	10%	Someone else (such as a friend, neighbor, or family) drives me, using their vehicle
9%	6%	Someone else (such as a friend, neighbor, or family) drives me, using my own vehicle
1%	<1%	I take a taxi cab
7%	2%	I take public transportation (such as a bus or government-provided transit)
4%	1%	Other: _____

In the last 6 months, how often did you need assistance from other sources (such as friends, family, public transportation, etc.) to get to your health care visit?

WP (n=952)	MPC (n=793)	Response options
41%	57%	Never
33%	29%	Sometimes
8%	5%	Usually
18%	8%	Always

In the last 6 months, was there any time when you needed transportation to or from a health care visit but could not get it for any reason?

WP (n=943)	MPC (n=783)	Response options
20%	10%	Yes
80%	90%	No

In the past 6 months, how much, if at all, have you worried about your ability to pay for the cost of transportation to or from a health care visit?

WP (n=950)	MPC (n=787)	Response options
50%	62%	Not at all
22%	18%	A little
14%	11%	Somewhat
14%	8%	A great deal

**Do you think any of the following would keep you from getting a physical exam this year?
(Choose all that apply)**

WP (n=972)	MPC (n=800)	Response options
15%	15%	I am not sure where to go to get a physical exam
10%	8%	I don't believe I need a physical exam
9%	3%	Getting transportation to my doctor's office is hard
8%	6%	I don't like getting a physical exam
5%	6%	It is hard to get an appointment for a physical exam from my doctor
9%	14%	Other: Including- "Already had a physical exam this year", "Difficulty taking time off from work or family responsibilities" and "Don't have a doctor/difficulty finding a doctor/don't like current doctor"

Limitations

As mentioned previously, these are strictly descriptive statistics showing the frequencies for each transportation-related question. There is no comparison group at this point. This also does not include others who may enroll into IHAWP but were not previously IowaCare members. When there are results for similar questions for both Medicaid and IHAWP enrollees available in spring 2015, we will have a better assessment of the impact of not including NEMT as a covered service for IHAWP members.